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Energy Conservation Specialist
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Development Officer
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Development Assistant
Melissa Mendoza
Community Programs Specialist
Regina Pelrine
Executive Administrative Assistant

Operation Fuel Staff
Dear Friends,

This past winter, Operation Fuel reached some significant milestones. It was our 40th year of providing energy assistance to Connecticut households. During this time, we also helped our 150,000th family.

Since we began in 1977 through June 30, 2017, Operation Fuel has provided over $47.6 million in energy grants to nearly 153,000 households throughout Connecticut. Many of these households were extremely vulnerable and included children, the elderly and people with chronic illnesses.

Over the years, we have evolved from a small winter heating assistance program into a statewide year-round energy assistance program. Operation Fuel has also become a strong advocate for lower-income families and individuals whose voices otherwise wouldn’t be heard. Through our annual Home Energy Affordability Gap study, we have brought awareness and a better understanding of the energy affordability crisis to state officials, legislators and business leaders.

We never could have accomplished all of this without the generosity and support of our community and business partners and donors. I am also very grateful for the hard work of our wonderful staff and our dedicated fuel banks. It is an honor to be a part of this great organization.

With your continued generosity and partnership, Operation Fuel will help protect Connecticut’s struggling families and individuals from having to make tough choices such as paying the gas bill or buying food. Thank you for your support!

Sincerely,

Nancy Bulkeley
Chair, Board of Directors
Operation Fuel
A Year in Review

Operation Fuel is the only organization in Connecticut that provides year-round emergency energy assistance statewide. For the past 40 years, we have helped families and individuals who are in financial crisis and have nowhere else to turn. Since we began in 1977, Operation Fuel has provided over $476 million in energy grants to nearly 153,000 households throughout Connecticut.

This past fiscal year, we helped 20,415 individuals who are in danger of having their electricity shut off; educating individuals that struggle with home energy costs for households to access Operation Fuel’s services. In fiscal year 2017, we worked with 109 fuel banks located strategically throughout Connecticut Green Bank and its purpose is to connect energy homeowners, about different ways to save money by lowering their home energy costs. HIPP provides energy assistance grants to 239 Connecticut households and made it possible for 596 people to obtain $1,241 more in annual energy bills than they can afford to pay. On average, each of the 322,000 households owes about $1,241 more in annual energy bills than they can afford to pay. State lower their operating costs through energy efficiency improvements such as lighting, refrigeration and weatherization assessments and 200 have made energy efficiency business owners with the utility companies’ energy efficiency programs.  The information sessions have yielded the best outcomes with outreach efforts have included one-on-one meetings at intake sites at the time of energy assistance application, meetings by stakeholders, Geeno works directly with small business owners and enhanced in the upcoming year.

Energy Affordability Crisis

Operation Fuel serves as the voice for lower-income households that struggle with home energy. For the past several years, we have conducted a statewide energy affordability study. According to Operation Fuel’s Home Energy Affordability Gap: Connecticut (2016) report, there are now 327,000 Connecticut households, with incomes at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level, that can’t afford to pay their energy bills.

In total, these households share an energy affordability gap of $399 million, which declined by nearly $11 million from $410 million in 2015. The drop was mainly due to a reduction in the price of home heating oil and natural gas. The affordability gap is the portion of their energy bills that the 327,000 Connecticut households cannot afford to pay, not the entire amount that they owe. On average, each of the 327,000 households owe about $1,241 more in annual energy bills than they can afford to pay.

Add-a-Dollar Program

Our Add-a-Dollar program has been a significant source of funding since it started in late 1983. Operation Fuel uses 100% of all Add-a-Dollar donations for energy assistance. This past fiscal year, Operation Fuel raised $665,387 through the Add-a-Dollar program; $518,563 was from utility customers’ donations and $146,824 was in utility provided shareholder-matching funds.

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Some of the areas that Operation Fuel has expanded into include: assisting households that are in danger of having their electricity shut off, educating households on how to control their energy expenses; helping small business owners become more energy efficient, bringing about greater awareness of Connecticut’s energy affordability crisis; and providing energy assistance to families and individuals who are in danger of becoming homeless.

In the past, Operation Fuel’s primary focus was on the availability of energy assistance and the need to lift people out of poverty through energy assistance and education. The information sessions are being replicated at its Power Summit 2017 this spring.  Attendees exchanged ideas and strategies for educating energy assistance recipients, who are lower-income households manage their energy expenses. Besides Operation Fuel’s staff, there were representatives from organizations, businesses, government and enhanced in the upcoming year.

Outreach efforts have included one-on-one meetings at intake businesses with energy assessments; 28 of the businesses offered programs.  The information sessions are being replicated at its Power Summit 2017 this spring.  Attendees exchanged ideas and strategies for educating energy assistance recipients, who are lower-income households manage their energy expenses. Besides Operation Fuel’s staff, there were representatives from organizations, businesses, government and religious organizations.
Keeping Families from Being Homeless

The Homeless Intervention and Prevention Program (HIPP) is one way that Operation Fuel works with its community partners to help Connecticut households with their energy needs. This past fiscal year, HIPP provided $29,196 in energy assistance grants to 50 families and individuals who were either homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Operation Fuel started this program in 2013 to help prevent and eliminate homelessness that occurs as a result of unaffordable home energy costs. HIPP provides energy assistance grants to people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and need to pay past due energy/utility bills to either stay in their home or transition from homelessness to permanent housing. Applicants for HIPP must be below 60% of the state median income to qualify for an energy assistance grant.

Since it began, HIPP has provided $132,655 in energy assistance to 239 Connecticut households and made it possible for 596 people to either resume or maintain housing. Operation Fuel’s community partners for HIPP this past fiscal year were Inspirica, Inc. in Stamford, Mercy Housing and Shelter Corporation in Hartford, which serves Greater Hartford and Middlesex County, and Operation Hope in Fairfield. We hope to expand this vital program in the coming year.

Social Agency Energy Assistance Conference

In partnership with Eversource Energy, United Illuminating, Southern Connecticut Gas, and Connecticut Natural Gas, Operation Fuel held its annual statewide Social Agency Energy Assistance Conference in October. We held the conference to help prepare our fuel banks and their staff for the upcoming winter. The primary focus was on the availability of energy assistance and various programs that the utility companies have to help lower-income households manage their energy expenses. Besides Operation Fuel and our fuel banks, representatives from the utility companies and key state agencies participated in the conference.

Advocating for Long-Term Solutions
Operation Fuel focused on Connecticut’s energy affordability crisis at its Power Summit 2017 this spring. Attendees exchanged ideas on the best ways to meet the energy needs of Connecticut’s low-income households and how to make energy more affordable. Besides Operation Fuel’s staff, there were representatives from several fuel banks, Eversource Energy, United Illuminating, the state department of Public Utilities Regulatory Authority and the state department of Social Services. This meeting is an example of how Operation Fuel advocates for low-income households and is working with its community partners to find long-term solutions.

Partnering with Eversource on New Start
For the past two years, Operation Fuel has partnered with Eversource Energy to help increase enrollment in the utility’s New Start program. This year, Operation Fuel assisted 1,257 households with a New Start enrollment, re-enrollment or budget payment. The program helps to eliminate an outstanding balance for customers who meet specific eligibility requirements, including income. After Eversource reviews an eligible customer’s billing history, a payment plan is set up for 12 months. As long as New Start payments are made, electric service will not be shut off despite the outstanding balance and a portion of the balance will be forgiven.

Helping Small Businesses
Operation Fuel continues to help small businesses throughout the state lower their operating costs through energy efficiency measures. Since 2013, Operation Fuel has partnered with Eversource Energy and United Illuminating to connect small business owners with the utility companies’ energy efficiency incentives and to provide supplemental financial assistance toward making improvements that reduce energy costs. During the past fiscal year, Operation Fuel provided 35 small businesses with energy assessments; 28 of the businesses completed energy saving upgrades. Since the small business program began, more than 340 small businesses have completed energy assessments and 100 have made energy efficiency improvements such as lighting, refrigeration and weatherization measures. The program has expanded from the original five pilot communities to 26 cities and towns throughout Connecticut.

This past fiscal year, Operation Fuel completed its first large-scale comprehensive project implementing efficiency upgrades at an East Hartford supermarket. The project was funded in part by a grant from the Farmington Bank Community Foundation. Additional grant funding from the Farmington Bank Community Foundation and the People’s United Community Foundation supported comprehensive energy efficiency upgrades for five other small businesses.

www.operationfuel.org
Residential Energy Conservation Efforts

In fiscal year 2017, Operation Fuel continued experimenting with strategies for educating energy assistance recipients, who are homeowners, about different ways to save money by lowering their energy consumption. The program is a partnership with the Connecticut Green Bank and its purpose is to connect energy assistance clients with existing resources that provide long-term energy savings. Homeowners are provided information on Home Energy Solutions (HES), and the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP), the Green Bank’s solar energy program, and various energy-related loan programs.

Outreach efforts have included on-the-spot meetings at intake sites at the time of energy assistance application, meetings by appointment at intake sites, and a series of informational sessions that bring together service providers in a forum setting. The information sessions have yielded the best outcomes with almost all attendees opting to participate in one or more of the offered programs. The information sessions are being replicated and enhanced in the upcoming year.

Staff Updates

Geeno Gordon joined Operation Fuel this past fiscal year as an Energy Conservation Specialist. Geeno is working to raise awareness within the small business community regarding resources available to make energy efficiency improvements that yield long-term energy savings. In addition to reaching out to merchants groups, community organizations and other stakeholders, Geeno works directly with small business owners helping them access the programs and services they need. Geeno is also supporting Operation Fuel’s developing energy conservation efforts in the residential sector. Before coming to Operation Fuel, Geeno had extensive community relations experience, including serving as a link between Hartford businesses and the Metropolitan District (MDC) during its recent large scale clean water project.

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Assistance Provided

Financials

Statement of Financial Position
For the year ended June 30, 2017

ASSETS
Cash and Cash Equivalents 2,737,083
Certificates of Deposit 529,351
Grants and Other Receivables 92,860
Prepaid Expense 11,771
Security Deposit 3,341
Total Current Assets 3,374,406

OTHER ASSETS
Property and Equipment 33,137 (Net of depreciation)
Total Assets 3,407,543

Liabilities and Net Assets
For the year ended June 30, 2017

LIABILITIES
Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities 2,337,083
Deferred Revenue - Small Business Program 529,351
Charitable Gift Annuity Payment Liability 92,860
Prepaid Expense 11,771
Security Deposit 3,341
Total Current Liabilities 3,374,406

NET ASSETS
Unrestricted 2,949,607
Temporarily Restricted 336,938
Total Net Assets 3,286,545

Total Liabilities and Net Assets 3,407,543
Revenues and Expenses
For the Year Ended June 30, 2017

REVENUES AND SUPPORT FOR PROGRAMS

- Energy Related Industry: $24,629
- Governmental Grants - State: $2,100,000
- Add-a-Dollar: $518,963
- Foundation Grants: $273,318
- Individuals: $360,305
- Utility Shareholder Match: $146,824
- Corporations and Small Businesses: $44,520
- Faith Communities: $20,070
- Program Contracts: $110,323
- Fines and Settlements: $141,256
- Interest Income: $8,005

Grand Total Revenue and Support: $3,747,813

EXPENSES

- Energy Assistance Programs: $4,237,121
- Management: $235,962
- Fundraising: $292,695

Total Expenses: $4,665,978

Financials

Energy Assistance Programs: 88.6%
Fundraising: 6.3%
Management: 5.1%
Governmental Grants - State: 56%
Add-a-Dollar: 13.8%
Individuals: 9.6%
Foundation Grants: 7.3%
Utility Shareholder Match: 3.9%
Fines and Settlements: 3.8%
Program Contracts: 2.9%
Corporations and Small Businesses: 1.2%
Faith Communities: 0.5%
Interest Income: 0.2%
Energy Related Industry: 0.7%

WE'RE ALL PART OF THE OPERATION.